

## § 301.7701-2

## 26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-03 Edition)

qualified cost sharing arrangement under § 1.482-7 of this chapter is not recognized as a separate entity for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. See § 1.482-7 of this chapter for the proper treatment of qualified cost sharing arrangements.

(d) *Domestic and foreign entities.* For purposes of this section and §§ 301.7701-2 and 301.7701-3, an entity is a domestic entity if it is created or organized in the United States or under the law of the United States or of any State; an entity is foreign if it is not domestic. See sections 7701(a)(4) and (a)(5).

(e) *State.* For purposes of this section and § 301.7701-2, the term *State* includes the District of Columbia.

(f) *Effective date.* The rules of this section are effective as of January 1, 1997.

[T.D. 8697, 61 FR 66588, Dec. 18, 1996]

### § 301.7701-2 Business entities; definitions.

(a) *Business entities.* For purposes of this section and § 301.7701-3, a *business entity* is any entity recognized for federal tax purposes (including an entity with a single owner that may be disregarded as an entity separate from its owner under § 301.7701-3) that is not properly classified as a trust under § 301.7701-4 or otherwise subject to special treatment under the Internal Revenue Code. A business entity with two or more members is classified for federal tax purposes as either a corporation or a partnership. A business entity with only one owner is classified as a corporation or is disregarded; if the entity is disregarded, its activities are treated in the same manner as a sole proprietorship, branch, or division of the owner.

(b) *Corporations.* For federal tax purposes, the term *corporation* means—

(1) A business entity organized under a Federal or State statute, or under a statute of a federally recognized Indian tribe, if the statute describes or refers to the entity as incorporated or as a corporation, body corporate, or body politic;

(2) An association (as determined under § 301.7701-3);

(3) A business entity organized under a State statute, if the statute describes or refers to the entity as a joint-stock company or joint-stock association;

(4) An insurance company;

(5) A State-chartered business entity conducting banking activities, if any of its deposits are insured under the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, as amended, 12 U.S.C. 1811 *et seq.*, or a similar federal statute;

(6) A business entity wholly owned by a State or any political subdivision thereof, or a business entity wholly owned by a foreign government or any other entity described in § 1.892-2T;

(7) A business entity that is taxable as a corporation under a provision of the Internal Revenue Code other than section 7701(a)(3); and

(8) *Certain foreign entities*—(i) *In general.* Except as provided in paragraphs (b)(8)(ii) and (d) of this section, the following business entities formed in the following jurisdictions:

American Samoa, Corporation  
Argentina, Sociedad Anonima  
Australia, Public Limited Company  
Austria, Aktiengesellschaft  
Barbados, Limited Company  
Belgium, Societe Anonyme  
Belize, Public Limited Company  
Bolivia, Sociedad Anonima  
Brazil, Sociedade Anonima  
Canada, Corporation and Company  
Chile, Sociedad Anonima  
People's Republic of China, Gufen Youxian  
Gongsi  
Republic of China (Taiwan), Ku-fen Yu-hsien  
Kung-szu  
Colombia, Sociedad Anonima  
Costa Rica, Sociedad Anonima  
Cyprus, Public Limited Company  
Czech Republic, Akciova Spolecnost  
Denmark, Aktieselskab  
Ecuador, Sociedad Anonima or Compania Anonima  
Egypt, Sharikat Al-Mossahamah  
El Salvador, Sociedad Anonima  
Finland, Julkinen Osakeyhtio/Publikt Aktiebolag  
France, Societe Anonyme  
Germany, Aktiengesellschaft  
Greece, Anonymos Etairia  
Guam, Corporation  
Guatemala, Sociedad Anonima  
Guyana, Public Limited Company  
Honduras, Sociedad Anonima  
Hong Kong, Public Limited Company  
Hungary, Reszvenytarsasag  
Iceland, Hlutfelag  
India, Public Limited Company  
Indonesia, Perseroan Terbuka  
Ireland, Public Limited Company  
Israel, Public Limited Company  
Italy, Societa per Azioni  
Jamaica, Public Limited Company  
Japan, Kabushiki Kaisha

## Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

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Kazakstan, Ashyk Aktsionerlik Kogham  
Republic of Korea, Chusik Hoesa  
Liberia, Corporation  
Luxembourg, Societe Anonyme  
Malaysia, Berhad  
Malta, Public Limited Company  
Mexico, Sociedad Anonima  
Morocco, Societe Anonyme  
Netherlands, Naamloze Vennootschap  
New Zealand, Limited Company  
Nicaragua, Compania Anonima  
Nigeria, Public Limited Company  
Northern Mariana Islands, Corporation  
Norway, Allment Aksjeselskap  
Pakistan, Public Limited Company  
Panama, Sociedad Anonima  
Paraguay, Sociedad Anonima  
Peru, Sociedad Anonima  
Philippines, Stock Corporation  
Poland, Spolka Akcyjna  
Portugal, Sociedade Anonima  
Puerto Rico, Corporation  
Romania, Societe pe Actiuni  
Russia, Otkrytoye Aktsionernoy  
Obshchestvo  
Saudi Arabia, Sharikat Al-Mossamahah  
Singapore, Public Limited Company  
Slovak Republic, Akciova Spolocnost  
South Africa, Public Limited Company  
Spain, Sociedad Anonima  
Surinam, Naamloze Vennootschap  
Sweden, Publika Aktiebolag  
Switzerland, Aktiengesellschaft  
Thailand, Borisat Chamkad (Mahachon)  
Trinidad and Tobago, Limited Company  
Tunisia, Societe Anonyme  
Turkey, Anonim Sirket  
Ukraine, Aktsionerne Tovaristvo Vidkritogo  
Tipu  
United Kingdom, Public Limited Company  
United States Virgin Islands, Corporation  
Uruguay, Sociedad Anonima  
Venezuela, Sociedad Anonima or Compania  
Anonima

(ii) *Clarification of list of corporations in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section—(A) Exceptions in certain cases.* The following entities will not be treated as corporations under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section:

(1) With regard to Canada, a Nova Scotia Unlimited Liability Company (or any other company or corporation all of whose owners have unlimited liability pursuant to federal or provincial law).

(2) With regard to India, a company deemed to be a public limited company solely by operation of section 43A(1) (relating to corporate ownership of the company), section 43A(1A) (relating to annual average turnover), or section 43A(1B) (relating to ownership interests in other companies) of the Compa-

nies Act, 1956 (or any combination of these), provided that the organizational documents of such deemed public limited company continue to meet the requirements of section 3(1)(iii) of the Companies Act, 1956.

(3) With regard to Malaysia, a Sendirian Berhad.

(B) *Inclusions in certain cases.* With regard to Mexico, the term Sociedad Anonima includes a Sociedad Anonima that chooses to apply the variable capital provision of Mexican corporate law (Sociedad Anonima de Capital Variable).

(iii) *Public companies.* For purposes of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section, with regard to Cyprus, Hong Kong, and Jamaica, the term Public Limited Company includes any Limited Company that is not defined as a private company under the corporate laws of those jurisdictions. In all other cases, where the term Public Limited Company is not defined, that term shall include any Limited Company defined as a public company under the corporate laws of the relevant jurisdiction.

(iv) *Limited companies.* For purposes of this paragraph (b)(8), any reference to a Limited Company includes, as the case may be, companies limited by shares and companies limited by guarantee.

(v) *Multilingual countries.* Different linguistic renderings of the name of an entity listed in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section shall be disregarded. For example, an entity formed under the laws of Switzerland as a Societe Anonyme will be a corporation and treated in the same manner as an Aktiengesellschaft.

(c) *Other business entities.* For federal tax purposes—

(1) The term *partnership* means a business entity that is not a corporation under paragraph (b) of this section and that has at least two members.

(2) *Wholly owned entities—(i) In general.* A business entity that has a single owner and is not a corporation under paragraph (b) of this section is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner.

(ii) *Special rule for certain business entities.* If the single owner of a business entity is a bank (as defined in section 581, or, in the case of a foreign bank, as

defined in section 585(a)(2)(B) without regard to the second sentence thereof), then the special rules applicable to banks under the Internal Revenue Code will continue to apply to the single owner as if the wholly owned entity were a separate entity. For this purpose, the special rules applicable to banks under the Internal Revenue Code do not include the rules under sections 864(c), 882(c), and 884.

(d) *Special rule for certain foreign business entities*—(1) *In general.* Except as provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section, a foreign business entity described in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section will not be treated as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section if—

(i) The entity was in existence on May 8, 1996;

(ii) The entity's classification was relevant (as defined in § 301.7701-3(d)) on May 8, 1996;

(iii) No person (including the entity) for whom the entity's classification was relevant on May 8, 1996, treats the entity as a corporation for purposes of filing such person's federal income tax returns, information returns, and withholding documents for the taxable year including May 8, 1996;

(iv) Any change in the entity's claimed classification within the sixty months prior to May 8, 1996, occurred solely as a result of a change in the organizational documents of the entity, and the entity and all members of the entity recognized the federal tax consequences of any change in the entity's classification within the sixty months prior to May 8, 1996;

(v) A reasonable basis (within the meaning of section 6662) existed on May 8, 1996, for treating the entity as other than a corporation; and

(vi) Neither the entity nor any member was notified in writing on or before May 8, 1996, that the classification of the entity was under examination (in which case the entity's classification will be determined in the examination).

(2) *Binding contract rule.* If a foreign business entity described in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section is formed after May 8, 1996, pursuant to a written binding contract (including an accepted bid to develop a project) in effect on May 8,

1996, and all times thereafter, in which the parties agreed to engage (directly or indirectly) in an active and substantial business operation in the jurisdiction in which the entity is formed, paragraph (d)(1) of this section will be applied to that entity by substituting the date of the entity's formation for May 8, 1996.

(3) *Termination of grandfather status*—(i) *In general.* An entity that is not treated as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section by reason of paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section will be treated permanently as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section from the earliest of:

(A) The effective date of an election to be treated as an association under § 301.7701-3;

(B) A termination of the partnership under section 708(b)(1)(B) (regarding sale or exchange of 50 percent or more of the total interest in an entity's capital or profits within a twelve month period); or

(C) A division of the partnership under section 708(b)(2)(B).

(ii) *Special rule for certain entities.* For purposes of paragraph (d)(2) of this section, paragraph (d)(3)(i)(B) of this section shall not apply if the sale or exchange of interests in the entity is to a related person (within the meaning of sections 267(b) and 707(b)) and occurs no later than twelve months after the date of the formation of the entity.

(e) *Effective date.* Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (e), the rules of this section apply as of January 1, 1997, except that paragraph (b)(6) applies on or after January 14, 2002, to a business entity wholly owned by a foreign government regardless of any prior entity classification, and paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section applies to taxable years beginning after January 12, 2001. The reference to the Finnish, Maltese, and Norwegian entities in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section is applicable on November 29, 1999. The reference to the Trinidadian entity in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section applies to entities formed on or after November 29, 1999. Any Maltese or Norwegian entity that becomes an eligible entity as a result of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section in effect on November 29, 1999 may elect by February 14, 2000

to be classified for federal tax purposes as an entity other than a corporation retroactive to any period from and including January 1, 1997. Any Finnish entity that becomes an eligible entity as a result of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section in effect on November 29, 1999 may elect by February 14, 2000 to be classified for federal tax purposes as an entity other than a corporation retroactive to any period from and including September 1, 1997.

[T.D. 8697, 61 FR 66589, Dec. 18, 1996, as amended by T.D. 8844, 64 FR 66583, Nov. 29, 1999; T.D. 9012, 67 FR 49864, Aug. 1, 2002]

**§ 301.7701-3 Classification of certain business entities.**

(a) *In general.* A business entity that is not classified as a corporation under § 301.7701-2(b) (1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8) (an *eligible entity*) can elect its classification for federal tax purposes as provided in this section. An eligible entity with at least two members can elect to be classified as either an association (and thus a corporation under § 301.7701-2(b)(2)) or a partnership, and an eligible entity with a single owner can elect to be classified as an association or to be disregarded as an entity separate from its owner. Paragraph (b) of this section provides a default classification for an eligible entity that does not make an election. Thus, elections are necessary only when an eligible entity chooses to be classified initially as other than the default classification or when an eligible entity chooses to change its classification. An entity whose classification is determined under the default classification retains that classification (regardless of any changes in the members' liability that occurs at any time during the time that the entity's classification is relevant as defined in paragraph (d) of this section) until the entity makes an election to change that classification under paragraph (c)(1) of this section. Paragraph (c) of this section provides rules for making express elections. Paragraph (d) of this section provides special rules for foreign eligible entities. Paragraph (e) of this section provides special rules for classifying entities resulting from partnership terminations and divisions under section 708(b). Paragraph (f) of this section sets

forth the effective date of this section and a special rule relating to prior periods.

(b) *Classification of eligible entities that do not file an election*—(1) *Domestic eligible entities.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, unless the entity elects otherwise, a domestic eligible entity is—

(i) A partnership if it has two or more members; or

(ii) Disregarded as an entity separate from its owner if it has a single owner.

(2) *Foreign eligible entities*—(i) *In general.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, unless the entity elects otherwise, a foreign eligible entity is—

(A) A partnership if it has two or more members and at least one member does not have limited liability;

(B) An association if all members have limited liability; or

(C) Disregarded as an entity separate from its owner if it has a single owner that does not have limited liability.

(ii) *Definition of limited liability.* For purposes of paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, a member of a foreign eligible entity has limited liability if the member has no personal liability for the debts of or claims against the entity by reason of being a member. This determination is based solely on the statute or law pursuant to which the entity is organized, except that if the underlying statute or law allows the entity to specify in its organizational documents whether the members will have limited liability, the organizational documents may also be relevant. For purposes of this section, a member has personal liability if the creditors of the entity may seek satisfaction of all or any portion of the debts or claims against the entity from the member as such. A member has personal liability for purposes of this paragraph even if the member makes an agreement under which another person (whether or not a member of the entity) assumes such liability or agrees to indemnify that member for any such liability.

(3) *Existing eligible entities*—(i) *In general.* Unless the entity elects otherwise, an eligible entity in existence prior to the effective date of this section will have the same classification that the entity claimed under §§ 301.7701-1